

SHA'AR ZAHAV

FORWARD

שער זהב

I remember as a child being herded to sabbath school and compelled to go to Hebrew school. It didn't make sense; it wasn't any fun and I couldn't eat in class (except I would break a Nestles' chocolate bar in little pieces and put it carefully between my gums and the outside of my mouth and periodically take a taste). Still on those special occasions, in the main sanctuary during the sabbath service, it seemed to come together - the tradition was mine, the dovening was mine and the music was mine. Yesterday as I was hiking in Tilden Park, I found myself at first humming and then singing those songs/prayers - Adon Olan, selections from the Torah service and more. I can't remember the last time I did that. I realized Sha'ar Zahav brought me back to my roots - and it felt fine. In reflecting on how to approach writing a section for membership in the Forward, I was trying to determine what I could say about Sha'ar Zahav that would make a person want to become a member and thereby be numbered among our family. And I realized what does the synagogue offer us? Ourselves.

Please join us.

Shalom
Roger G.

Ritual Committee

High Holy Days: Our services for the High Holy Days attracted an awe-inspiring crowd, both for Rosh Hashanah and for Yom Kippur. A special highlight was the piano and 'cello rendition of Max Bruch's Kol Nidre, performed on Erev Yom Kippur. We were also pleased to have the active participation of so many people in the actual reading of the service. The variety of readers was refreshing, and the personal touch that so many brought to their parts was heartwarming. It was also gratifying to learn that two of our city supervisors and a state senator had joined us for services. This sort of political acknowledgement and acceptance is very encouraging.

Committee business: At the last meeting of the ritual committee Allen Bennett was re-elected committee chair. Business conducted including the docketing of agenda items "for the duration". Our priorities, as they came out of the meeting, were as follows: 1) to draw up and implement guidelines for conducting services, thus enabling us to open up this privilege to more members of the synagogue. This will include guidelines for the preparation and presentation of sermons as well; 2) to update and revise our Siddur, to include services for Shabbat evening and morning, as well as services for the festivals and other occasions. We will make every effort to include readable music (with transliteration); 3) to begin to calendar the assignment of services (who will conduct them, and when) about a month in advance. This calendaring task will rotate among the members of the committee.

Our next scheduled meeting will take place at 1650 Page Street on November second (2nd) at 7:30 p.m. All are welcome.

We are always seeking new members for this committee. If you would like to become a part of the creative liturgical process of the synagogue, we'd love to have you. And even if you don't, but would like to offer some input, please feel free to share it with us, so that we may use it in the improvement of our worship experiences.

Allen



Posters available from OHIO POSTER CO. and YA-EL IMPORTS.

It's easy to take blessings for granted, particularly in the Bay Area. As those who by some miracle have survived the 1950's and 1960's know, in those dear dead days beyond recall each gay man and lesbian was essentially alone. Some few were fortunate enough to have a circle of friends who gave them support at crucial moments. But beyond that, we were nothing more than an invisible minority, with each individual isolated from the other, each fending for themselves as best they could. The national conspiracy of silence during this societal insanity was especially burdensome. No mention of either gay men or lesbians was ever made except when alluding to us as perverted, or when some especially lurid scandal broke.

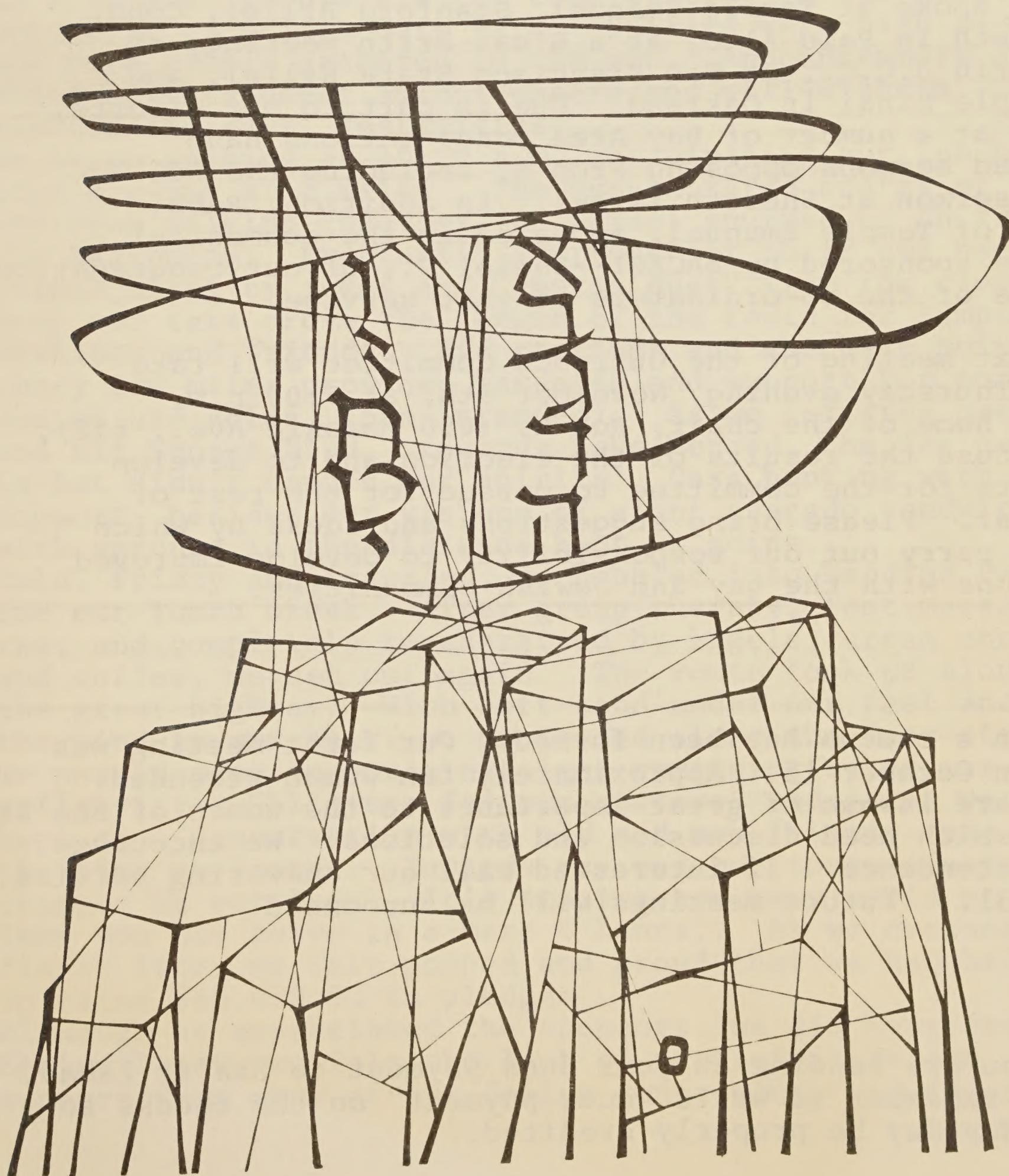
Being Jewish had its problems too. If you were genuinely religious and attended a shul, sooner or later some well-meaning person would ask, "You're not married? I know a nice lady (or man)--". The problem too of coping with the sense of wearing a mask even among your own people is one all of us have experienced even today. Again, our existence was totally ignored except as an isolated bizarre phenomenon.

Whether or not Proposition 6 will pass is moot. Nor are surveys wholly satisfactory. "There are lies, damned lies and there are statistics." At the least, it will be a photo finish. And voters' minds are strange things. In one small town at a community meeting when a debate about No. 6 was going on, one man got to his feet and, intermingling it with No. 5, announced homosexuals shouldn't be allowed to smoke. Too, human nature being what it is, "not much" as one writer puts it, some gays when approached about No. 6 feel no personal relationship to it. "But I am not a teacher," is their completely sincere response. The important thing would seem to be to hold firmly in mind that no matter what happens, the movement will keep on going. Too, what has kept Judaism going all this time is - humor. If you refuse to take a tragedy tragically, you have it licked. The ability to laugh is a sign of sanity. Perhaps there is an ultimate good in the problems that have commenced for us since Miami. Now gay men and lesbians are working together as never before. To a fair extent, the gay communities have toned their internecine squabbling and feuding. Unlike the defenders of the Second Temple, they have some willingness to forget their differences in the face of the common peril.

CONT.

It reminds one of the story of the couple who were down and out because there was no work in their area. The husband went to another city to find a job and send money back to his wife. His leg was broken in a traffic accident. People felt sorry and raised a fund to help him. He then wrote to his wife, "I was starving and out of work. Then I broke my leg, thank God, and now everything's all right."

Jordan L.



OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Outreach Committee has spent the last couple of months gearing up for the challenge of Proposition 6. Letters were sent to every Bay Area congregation (nearly sixty in all) asking for an opportunity to meet with their members to discuss the Proposition. As a result of those letters and follow-up phone calls, a number of speaking engagements were set. Members of the Outreach Committee and members of Hasheveth Ha'avud (The Lost Tribe) spoke at Temple Emanuel, Stanford Hillel, Cong. Kol Emeth in Palo Alto, at a B'nai Brith meeting, at the Marin J.C.C., at San Francisco State Hillel, and at Temple Sinai in Oakland. Due in part to our efforts, rabbis at a number of Bay Area congregations have preached sermons opposing Prop 6, including the Kol Nidre sermon at Sherith Israel. In addition, Rabbi Asher, of Temple Emanuel, appeared in the ecumenical service sponsored by BACABI--Daniel C., of our congregation, was one of the co-ordinators of that service.

The next meeting of the Outreach Committee will take place Thursday evening, November 9th, at 7:00 p.m. at the home of the chair, Rob M. (650 Masonic Ave., #12), to discuss the results of the election and to develop projects for the committee to pursue for the rest of the year. Please bring suggestions and ideas by which we can carry out our responsibility to develop improved relations with the gay and Jewish communities.

WOMEN

A woman's caucus has been formed. Our first meeting was held on October 15. Approximately ten women attended. There are issues of great importance to the women of Sha'ar Zahav which need discussion and solutions. We encourage your attendance. If interested call our answering service, 626-3131. Future meetings will be announced.

When you are sending in your dues payment to Sha'ar Zahav, please remember to write "dues payment" on the checks so that they may be properly credited.

"Women on the Move"

Close to 400 women, men and children participated in the Mile-a-thon sponsored by S.F. Women's Center on Saturday October 14th. Money was being raised for the future Women's builing in S.F. and for 60 various non-profit women's organizations in the Bay Area. Participants in the 15 mile course, (people in wheelchairs, on skates, on bicycles, jogging and walking) were responsible for soliciting sponsors on a 25¢ to \$5.00 per mile basis and for collection.

At 8:30 a.m. people started congregating in the music concourse in Golden Gate Park. Spirits were high as more and more people gathered in the sun. Announcements and brief entertainment amidst cheers and well-wishers started the days' festivities.

We began walking at 10:00 a.m. anticipating our lunch stop mid-way at 8 miles. The concentrated energy of everyone walking together (en masse) spurred us on from the beginning. Eventually everyone set their own pace helped along by jokes and "energy dust" from the clowns. Drop out cars drove the length of the route for limping lesbians and friends. Aid stations and check-in points every few miles provided bandaids and support for our bodies and soles, (pun intended). As we left the park and hit Sunset Blvd., towards Lake Merced, the fog came in but didn't dampen our spirits! Cars honking with support, besides our visions of giant avacado sandwich with sprouts in the distance kept us going.

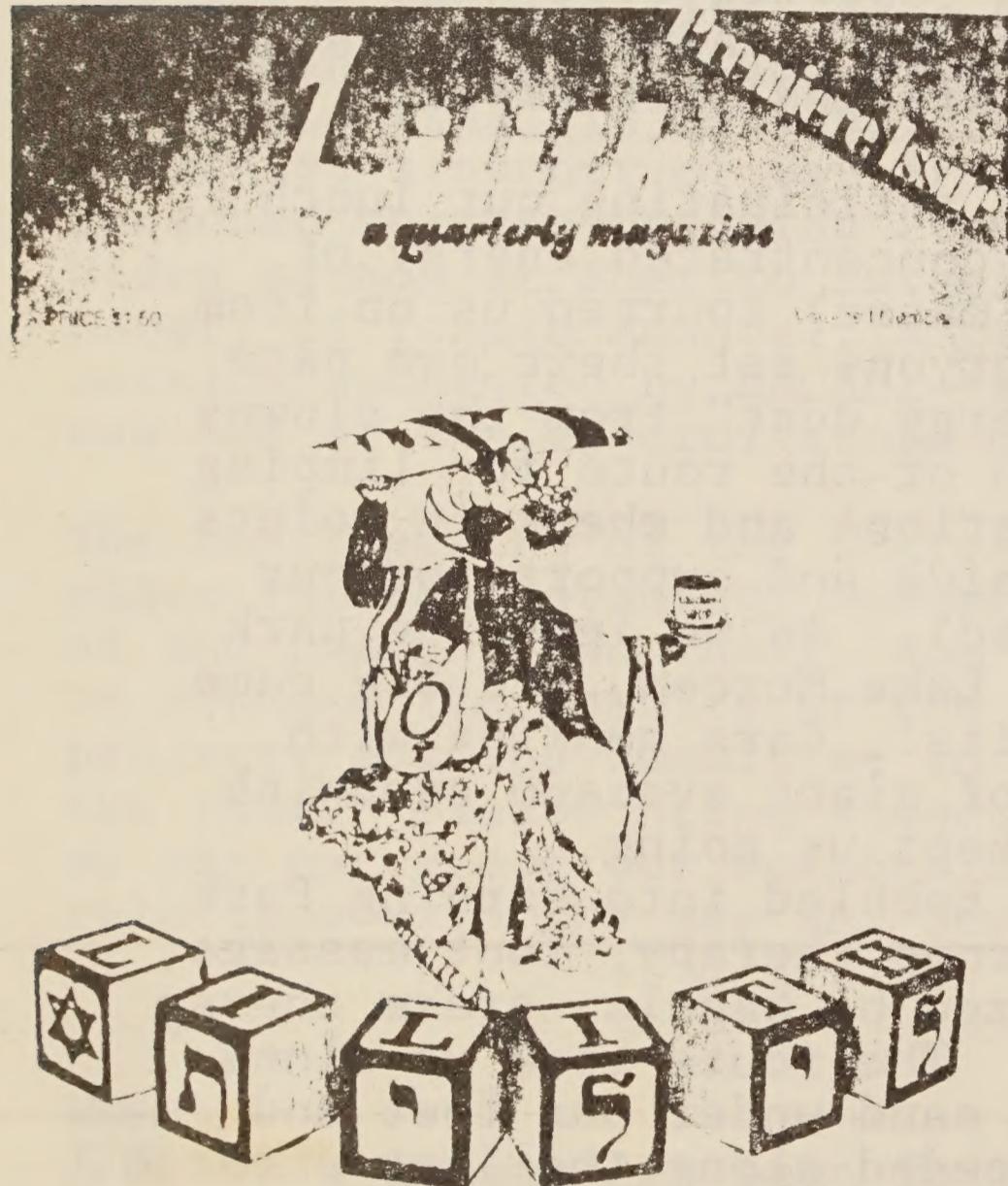
Cold, Frizzy and frazzled, we hobbled into Harding Park for our lunch break. After group therapy, foot massage, rest and completely re-energized by bagels, cream cheese and coffee, we set out again. The route took us along the great highway. With soft sand under our feet and the wind in our hair, we proceeded along the last stretch. We passed many encouraging signs reminding us of our solidarity - "blisters for our sisters" and still we kept on. Conversation with old and new friends made the time go faster. Towards the end our tongues were as cramped as our legs! It's amazing how many world problems you can solve in a mere 6 hours!! As we crossed the finish line, we felt pooped and proud that we had helped to raise \$60,000.00 in pledges...

Although we appreciated the sponsors we did have from Sha'ar Zahav, we felt the lack of participation and support from many of our fellow congregants and friends.

CONT.

Unfortunately, Sha'ar Zahav missed a unique fund-raising opportunity for a scholarship to next years conference in Israel for at least one lesbian representative from our congregation; as well as a chance to show solidarity with and strong support for the women's community and their efforts to obtain a building. Let's hope in the future there will be a large and visable Sha'ar Zahav contingent with happy faces and committed souls. Truly a "mitzvah"...

Lauren, Sandy and Robin



EXPLORING THE WORLD OF THE JEWISH WOMAN.

Lilith
500 E. 63rd St. • Suite 16C
New York, N.Y. 10021

Lilith is an exciting new publication (first issue Fall 1976) spawned by contemporary feminism, but, in this case, devoted entirely to the Jewish woman. A quarterly, *Lilith* is "named for our ancestor who insisted on equality with Adam," and it is dedicated "to changing the consciousness of the Jewish woman." *Lilith* devotes its pages to such themes as "Analysis of the Oppression of Jewish Women," "Surviving Single and Jewish," "New Rituals for Jewish Women," "Jews ZPG and Abort," "When a Jewish Wife Becomes a Widow," "Sexism in Jewish Textbooks and Children's Stories," "Our Abandoned Grandmothers in the Slums," "The Crisis of the Jewish Volunteer." Subscription price, \$6 per year; single issues, \$1.50.

On a recent evening I had the pleasure of having another fantastic home-cooked meal at Ellis' home.

During dinner the subject of "What are you going to write about this month", came up. Unfortunately at that time I had not the foggiest idea of what to write about, but I didn't tell him that. After taking a peak through the temple mail, I came across a white envelope addressed to "Jewish Gay-Li, Sh'ar Zehav." Upon opening it, I found a large, well put together pamphlet/newsletter sent out from a group called "GALA", Gay Atheist League of America. Oy vay, I thought, what will they think of next. Ellis took a look at the pamphlet and his only comment was, I wish we had the money that this group has for a newsletter! I had to remind him that atheists do not have UJA and Israel bonds to worry about - they can afford it. The pamphlet was interesting, with a Briggs interview and anti-gay-christian bible tract to spice things up, but all in all seemed to be well put together. The pamphlet basically took swipes at Christianity but Judaism got it a few times too.

GALA has three chapters now; a chapter in New York City, a chapter in LA/Orange County (where else - all the nuts running around down there), and one here in the City. But the largest question remains to be answered. Why did they send us their newsletter? Indeed, why even bother - I believe most of us couldn't care less about this group, so why waste the time (a sin) or the money (an even greater sin!) I know for a fact that many gay men and lesbians feel uncomfortable around people who are even slightly religious. No great loss, but I still had a hard time understanding where this person was coming from. C'est la vie!

I understand that organized religion has caused the deaths and unhappiness to billions of people throughout history - but you don't have to tell us, Jews have known that for years. But you do not get change by trying to destroy the system. The best results for change are by working through the system, and I believe that that is what we are doing at Sha'ar Zahav - making change happen by using the system.

I want to thank everyone who worked so hard to make the High Holiday services as fantastic as they were. Kol Nidre was very beautiful - a special thanks to the musicians for a very moving service.

One last comment - If you haven't sent in your membership card, please do. We are trying to reach as large a membership as possible.

Shalom
Tal'or

The FORWARD needs your articles. Anybody who would like to write a periodic column or just a single article of general interest to the congregation for publication in the FORWARD, please contact me. The FORWARD and the congregation will be most appreciative.

Ellis J.

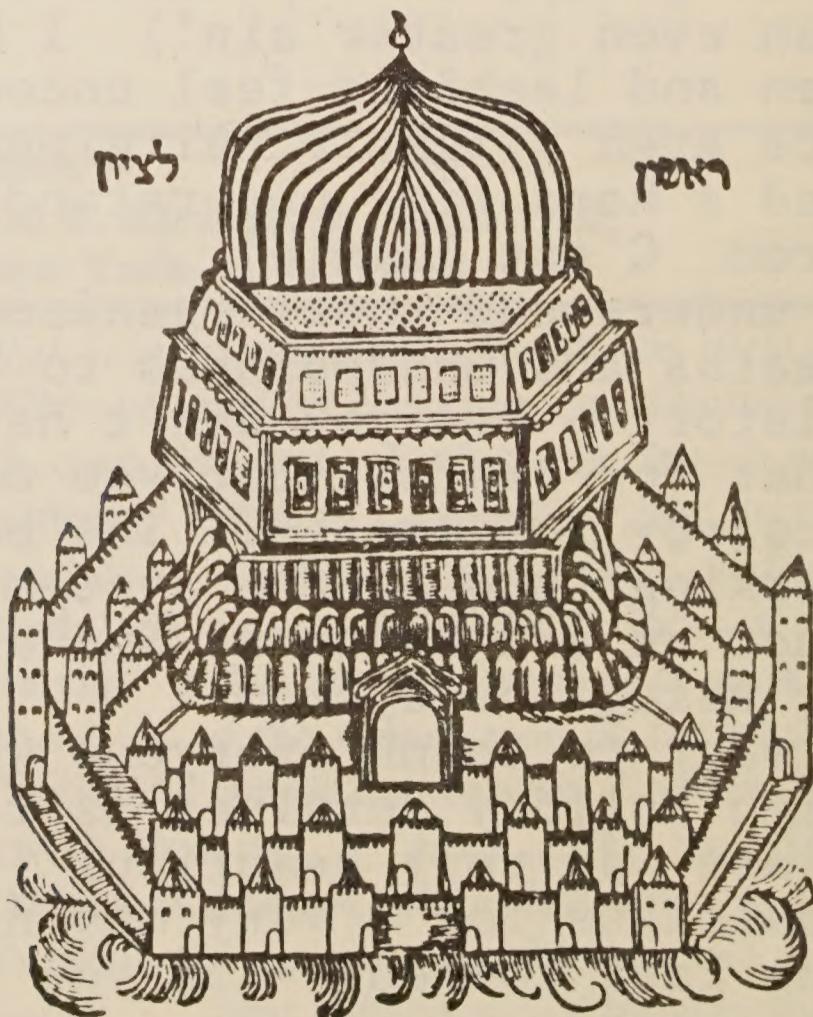
The Metropolitan Community Church of San Francisco has invited Sha'ar Zahav and other non-profit organizations which serve the gay community to participate in a Bay Area volleyball league. Each co-ed team is limited to 18 persons. Please contact Lauren (221-5713) or Ron at (552-6766) if you are interested in joining.

From the Jogging Club....

Our next run will be on November 19th at Stow Lake. Meet us at 10:00 a.m. for a fun-filled jog around the lake.

Lauren M.

The ad-hoc by-laws revision committee is being chaired by Bob E. If you are interested in being on this committee, please contact him.



committee dates

Outreach

The Outreach committee will meet at Rob's apartment, 650 Masonic #12 on Thursday, November 9, at 7:00 p.m.

ONEG

The Oneg committee will meet at Sandy's apartment, 528 Noe on Thursday, November 16 at 7:00 p.m. A new chairperson will be elected and new business will be discussed.

Va'ad

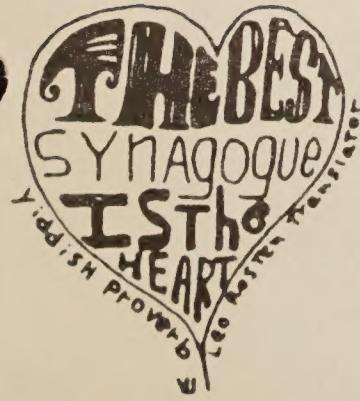
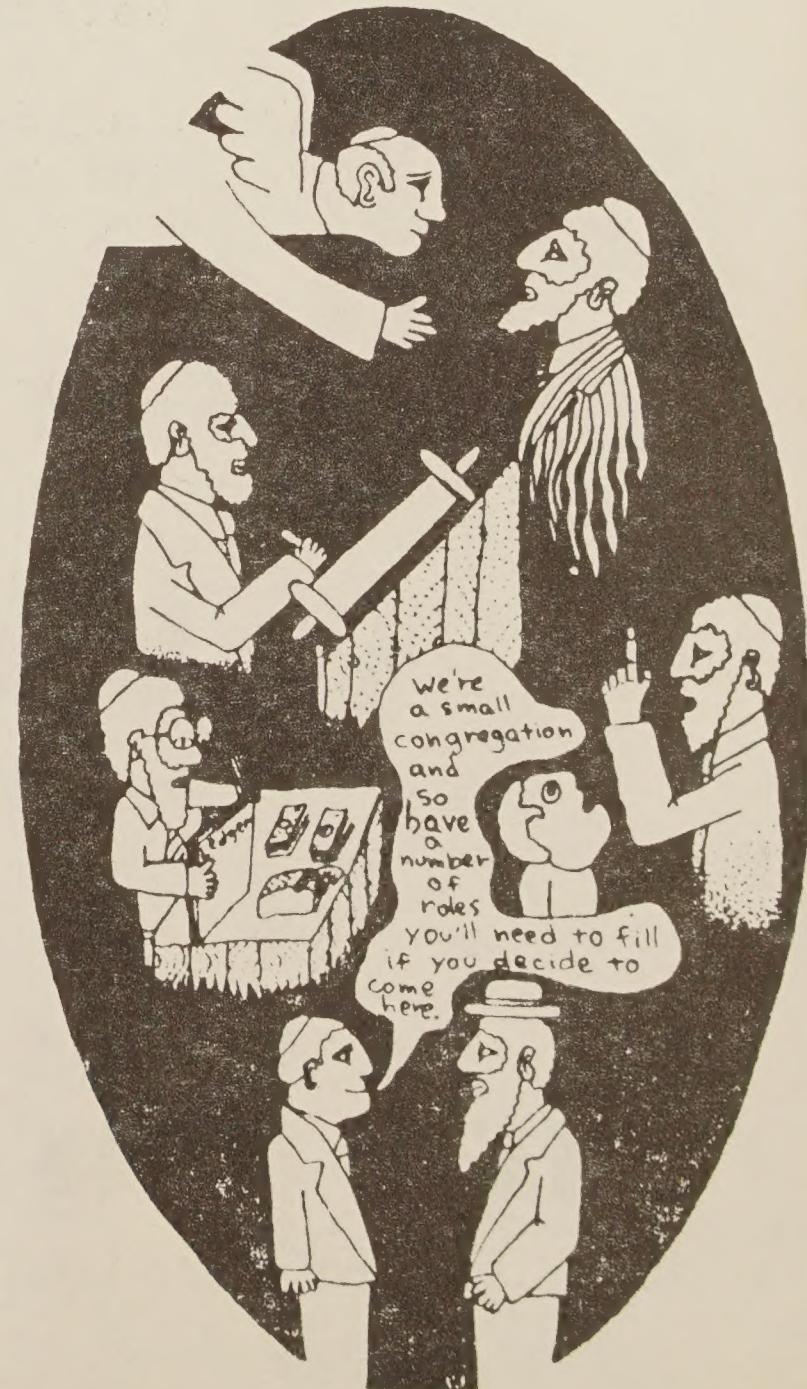
The next meeting of the Va'ad (board of directors) will be at Penny's apartment, 455 Cole #9 on Sunday, November 12 at 6:00 p.m. Anybody who is interested may attend as it is not restricted to Va'ad members.

Funding & Finance

The funding and finance committee will meet at Lauren's apartment, 455 Cole #10, on Wednesday, November 15 at 7:30 pm. A new chairperson will be elected and other business will be discussed.

Rabbi Selection

The ad-hoc rabbi selection committee meeting will be held after services on Friday evening, November 10. Anyone who is interested in this committee may attend.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Nov 3 Evening Services 8:00 p.m.
Torah portion, Noah, Gen. 6:9 - 11:32. Haftarah
Isaiah 54:1 - 55:5

Nov 10 Evening Services 8:00 p.m.
Torah portion, Lekh Lekha, Gen. 12:1 - 17:27.
Haftarah, Isaiah 40:27 - 41:16

Nov 17 Evening Services 8:00 p.m.
Torah portion, Va-Yera, Gen. 18:1 - 22:24.
Haftarah, Kings 4:1-37

Nov 24 Evening Services 8:00 p.m.
Torah portion, Hayye Sarah, Gen. 23:1 - 25:18.
Haftarah, Kings 1:1-31

Dec 1 Evening Services 8:00 p.m.
Torah portion, Toldot, Gen. 25:19 - 28:9.
Haftarah, Malachi 1:1 - 2:7

Dec 8 Evening Services 8:00 p.m.
Torah portion, Va-Yetze, Gen. 8:10 - 32:3.
Haftarah, Hosea 12:13 - 14:10

All services at Dovre Hall, 3543 18th Street, San Francisco

SHA'AR ZAHAV

THE CONGREGATION OF THE GOLDEN GATE Box 5640 San Francisco, Calif
Tel: 626-3131 94101

Reaching out to the Gay Community of the Bay Area